



INTRODUCTION: *SIT VENIA VERBO*

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The free movement of people, goods, services and capital is one of the cornerstone principles of the Treaty on the European Union. The provisions of the treaty provide for an individual's mobility in the social environment. We can argue that the Treaty on the European Union creates conditions for increasingly weaker dependence on nation-states. The decentralised movement directs us primarily towards individual self-expression and the pursuit of personal benefit. Movement is encouraged away from local and towards global centres, where administrative power and economic power (production, finance and trade) are concentrated. 'Freedom of movement' became the main condition for the geo-political structure in the EU economic space. The new European identity is formed by this condition and the provisions of the law establishing the supremacy of individual freedom/benefit.

Universal mobility in the cultural space of Western Europe was also important in other periods. However, its nature and its effects were different: they were centralising. West European societies were also known as 'mobile' in the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period.

Royal courts moved from residence to residence within their own countries, and the main state institutions and officials moved with them. Subjects would travel to the court to settle routine affairs or to seek justice. Dealing with diplomatic affairs was also affected by mobility. Sovereigns tended to meet in border areas, but seldom visited each other. In 1429, the border town of Lutsk was chosen as a meeting place for a conference between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. Usually messengers travelled between the courts. We can learn about messages sent long distances from Vilnius and the Kingdom of Poland to the Emperor Ferdinand, by reading the letters of Valentin Saurman von Jeltsch, a diplomat of the Holy Roman Empire at the court of Grand Duke Sigismund II Augustus, in 1561 and 1562.

Even subjects from the remotest corners would come to attend the estates meetings (*États généraux*, Parliament, Landtag, Sejm), at which the last word remained with the highest overlord (in French *suzerain*). The roots of the Sejm in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania go back to the assembly of noblemen and gentry in Salynas in 1398. The Sejm of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania formed between 1492 and 1566, as a representative body of gentry and nobility from different areas. During that period, it convened 19 times in Vilnius, four times in Brest, twice in Grodno, and once each in Navahrudak and Minsk. However, it was not the setting, but the person (the sovereign and the court) that formed the centre of public life. The sovereign's behaviour was imitated by the nobility (in Latin *nobilis*) travelling between their properties.

Property holdings changed, due to inheritance, purchase and sale, remortgaging, new family ties, or the acceptance of public offices from the sovereign. The total frequently consisted of various holdings in exchange for service, the spouse's lands, and the nucleus of inherited land. Even a successful land-ownership structure was threatened by being parcelled out and broken up into small lots. Heirs tended to dispose of a legacy independently. To avoid this, a hierarchy of inheritance was sought, whereby younger siblings who were pushed aside were encouraged to choose between service to the sovereign or the Church, or seeking happiness elsewhere.

Between the 11th and 15th centuries, landless nobles carried out colonisation processes in Central and Eastern Europe, in Slavic, Baltic and Finnish lands, in the west and the east, and in the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula. Wastelands emerged on the Prussian-Livonian border, and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, due to the wars of the 15th and 16th centuries, in which nobles, gentry and freemen took part. On the eastern outskirts of these political structures, the roguish younger sons of noble families joined the Cossacks and sought happiness in the steppes of the 'wasteland'. Dmytro Ivanovich Vyshnevetsky, a nobleman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, built an outpost against the Tartars and Turks on the island of Malaya Khortitsa in the River Dnieper with his own money. The Tartars who destroyed the fortress in 1557 never suspected that its defenders would give rise to the Cossacks of the Zaporizhian Sich.

It was possible to reach the most remote corners of Europe on horseback, on carts or wagons drawn by horses or oxen, on rafts floating down rivers, or on vessels hauled by *burlaks* (barge-haulers) or propelled by oars. Sailing ships opened up sea routes to other continents: Africa, Asia, America and Australia. Andrzej Rudomina, who was born into the family of the elder in Senasis Daugėliškis, worked as a Jesuit missionary in India and China from 1625 to 1630. A certain Krzysztof from Arciszcewo-Arciszewski, a *cliens* of Krzysztof Radziwill, the hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, became an officer in the Dutch West India Company, participated in military expeditions in Brazil in 1629, 1630, 1634 and 1638, and attained the rank of admiral. The first qualified medical doctor in New Amsterdam (now New York), and the headmaster of the first Latin school there from 1659 to 1661, was Alexander Carolus Curtius, a Lithuanian nobleman (*nobilis Lithuanus*).

The celibate princes of the Church and the large numbers of clergy were not put off by the question of inheriting material property. However, in Central and Eastern Europe they had to be more mobile than their counterparts in the west, which resulted in a smaller number of churches, a larger number of parishioners spread over a larger area, and greater distances between parish and diocesan centres. Attempts were made to improve the situation with assistance from preaching orders, the Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians. The lower density of parishes even produced good results: in 1579, during a visit to the Samogitian province, Tarquinius Peculus wrote about

the efforts of members of five communities of Catholic parishes to get high-quality spiritual ministrations. Their approach saw the deepening of Christianity and the results of former efforts by the clergy. The Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries and the reforms in the Catholic Church made the clergy of all confessions recognise the expectations of parishioners, and they became even more active. Competition between confessions promoted mobility among young people seeking a higher education, and also with academic staff coming from abroad. In 1542, by a decree of Albert, the Duke of Prussia, an academic gymnasium was set up which in a few years became the Collegium Albertinum. Later it became the Lutheran University of Königsberg. The first professors to be appointed were Stanislaus Rapagelanus and Abraham Culvensis, two Lithuanians from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The first college in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was founded in Vilnius by the Jesuits in 1570. In 1579, by a decree from the sovereign of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it became a university. The first heads of the school were Jakub Vujek and Piotr Skarga (Piotr Powęski) from Poland.

Noble seigneurs (in Latin *senior*) were unable to cope with the administration of their scattered holdings, and would therefore hire subordinate vassals, liegemen (in Latin *servitor*, *ministerialis*). A more complex system started to form in the Early Modern Period, based on personal commitments between the patron (*patronus* 'defender, guardian') and clients (*clients* 'wards'). Being closer to the suzerain (seigneur, patron) provided opportunities for exclusive favours, or the risk of losing them. Granting and refusing favours determined the boundaries of social mobility, how much a person could rise or fall. When climbing the ladder of social class, physical mobility tended to increase instead of decreasing, which was related to efforts to stay close to the favour-providing power, the suzerain, and simultaneously to consolidate the rights obtained.

Quite a lot of people were inspired to join the army, in the interests of defence, attack or a show of force, so most of the army consisted of subjects and not mercenaries. The structure of the army reflected the society of the time. The most senior posts were frequently given to the senior nobility, instead of the most talented people. They had the best armour and weapons, and the largest personal escorts and shock troops. Their wagons accounted for the longest caravans, blocking military campaigns. Poorly armed and less disciplined conscripts still made up most of the army. Over time, the nobles and the new rich gentry preferred not to risk their lives on the battlefield, but decided to manage their property and buy exemption from military service. The importance of mercenaries was growing. More disciplined formations of infantry, fighting for pay in the west, bristling with spears and halberds, and brandishing firearms, outdid the heavily armed cavalry. In Central and Eastern Europe, heavy cavalry continued to win victories in the steppes against light cavalry: Turks, Tartars, Cossacks and hajduks. In the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, horsemen wrapped up in wolf skins or leopard skins, and wearing eagle's feathers on their backs, were called hussars. In Hungary,

Austria, Germany and France, this name was applied to the light cavalry. Recruitment for their own army caused as much fear among local residents as an invasion by a foreign one. At that time, it was difficult to collect large supplies of food and fodder and keep them from going off. Therefore, whenever even a local army marched through, supplies, which were essential to the local people for survival and acquired through hard work, would be lost. A longer billet meant serious hardship. The same problem would arise whenever the sovereign's court stayed in town. The economic capacity of the area was evaluated. In order to accommodate guests properly, suitable houses and their hosts were registered: this happened in Vilnius in 1636, 1639 and 1645, and in Warsaw in 1659 and 1669. Increased demand for luxury goods and essential services did not always help. It resulted in a shortage of daily foodstuffs and a rise in prices, and a prolonged period of high prices would impoverish the people.

Physical mobility ensured survival and control. Gradually a more bureaucratic style of administration took root: it needed staff who were loyal, literate and numerate, and had good management skills. The efficient management of the state required good control and knowledge of the situation. Therefore, attempts were made to find out the number of solvent and insolvent subjects, their assets and their value, the proportion of the property that went to the lord and how it was disposed of, the military potential, and how fast mobilisation could be carried out. Centralised administration by appointed officials, their rotation, and the accounting of the property that was entrusted to them were already inculcated in the West European structures on the Baltic, in the dominions of the Teutonic Order. The Large and Small Offices Books (*das grosse Ämterbuch*, *das kleine Ämterbuch*) of the 14th and 15th centuries record the economic and military situations based on the carefully collected inventories of all commanderies, which were taken before the transfer of commandants, *pflegers* and *fogts* elsewhere. Books of land rent and local rural administrative districts and lists of conscripts reveal the intentions of the initiating institutions to get detailed information and monitor the situation. The census of horsemen made for the army in 1528 by Sigismund the Old, the sovereign of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, helped to evaluate the total military potential of 5,730 servicemen, individual localities, and noble families. The 1537 and 1538 inventory of liabilities of peasants and townspeople of the rural administrative districts of Samogitia, a crown estate of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, paved the way for economic reforms. The practice of correspondence called for personal mobility by officials and inter-institutional information. Information circulated more rapidly in the 16th and 17th centuries, thanks to the development of mail systems that were accessible to more social strata. In 1562, the Venice-Vienna-Krakow-Vilnius postal route opened: a letter from Krakow to Vilnius would take seven days. The development of printing technology was of great importance to the exchange of business information, news and comments on events.

Industrial development between the 15th and 17th centuries, urban growth, the increase in shipping, and the colonisation of overseas territories encouraged the demand in Western Europe for commodities (corn, salted meat, flax, hemp, wool, timber, ash and leather). The growing urban communities, ships' crews and overseas colonists needed increasing amounts of food. The deforestation of large areas resulted in a shortage of wood for fuel, housing and shipbuilding, and ash production. The decline of forests was the outcome of the expansion of arable and pastoral land. Hemp was the main material for manufacturing rope, which was used extensively in rigging. Textile manufacturing experienced a shortage of flax and wool yarn. The demand for material was stimulated not only by the trade in ready-made clothes, but also by the need for sailcloth. There was a huge diversity of uses for leather: parchment for documents, riding boots, saddles, wineskins and bags, jackets, shoulder pieces and belts, coachmen's whips, and sheaths for weapons. Manufacturers in the west bought cattle or hides from the east.

The great demand for raw materials in the west of Europe directed manufacturers' attention towards regions in the centre, the east and the north of the continent. These soon felt the benefits of orientation towards the west. In 1616, corn cost twice as much in Gdansk as in Lithuania. Gdansk, Königsberg and Riga became the largest cities on the eastern shores of the Baltic. Corn, flax and wool yarn, timber, leather, and oxen, from Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Prussia and Livonia, were sent to the Netherlands, England and France. The rivers Vistula, Nemunas, Neris and Daugava turned into commercial transit arteries. A network of inns, settlements and towns grew up on the main inland waterways and land routes. The process of reorientation towards western markets in Central and Eastern Europe led to the radical economic transformation of rural areas. In the 15th and 16th centuries, instead of continuing to direct the flow of free peasants towards the colonisation of the wastelands, the administrators of Prussia, Livonia, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland gradually started making efforts to concentrate and keep the workforce at home. Measures were taken to change their status. In 1507, dependent peasants in Livonia were deprived of the right to carry a weapon. The first Duke of Prussia also forbade peasants to bear arms. In the race for greater profits, large-scale farming was developed through the introduction of accounting and of travelling public servants. In 1529, in an instruction to the managers of his estates, the Grand Duke of Lithuania ordered land to be redistributed and villages to be reorganised in such a way as to provide one household with one *valakas* (about 20 hectares) of land. Based on this instruction, the great *valakas* land reform started in the 1550s, which changed the cultural landscape of the country. During the reforms, homesteads were moved and villages and estates were restructured. The *folwark* economy, based on the three-field system, restricted the mobility of peasants as far as the boundaries of the estate they were assigned to. The initiative of the lords was taken up by smaller landowners.